

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE

COMMUNITY OUTREACH STRATEGIC PLAN

(Please note the following Strategic Plan lists the projects and goals the Committee plans to implement in the upcoming years. This plan is in DRAFT format and all public comments are welcome. Simply respond to the 'Feedback Committee' section.)

MISSION:

The Superior Court of California, County of Riverside is dedicated to increasing public trust and confidence in the judicial system by: 1) facilitating effective communication between the court and the community; 2) assisting the court in the development and implementation of programs that are responsive to the needs and concerns of the community; and, 3) ensuring the fair and equal administration of justice to all.

VISION:

The Court's planning process is inclusive and represents a diverse blend of perspectives on the role and operation of the court. The court is known for continuously maintaining and/or implementing a variety of programs that: 1) educate the public on the role and operation of the court; and, 2) seek their input and involvement to improve the court system. The court seeks, by way of these activities, to actively build a sense of community among Community-Focused Planning Team members, the court, other government agencies, and the public.

GOAL I

QUALITY OF JUSTICE

Objective

QUALITY WORKFORCE – The court will participate in activities that promote the public's interest in pursuing careers in the justice system.

Mock Trialⁱ

Outreach to and educate young members of our community about the court's role, the varied positions available in the court, and particular court processes by recruiting judges and staff to: 1) serve as members of the Mock Trial Steering Committee; 2) assist in the mock trial planning; and, 3) actively participate in this annual event.

Law Day/ Day-On-The-Bench

Outreach to our local legislators by inviting them to physically experience the court system annually in order to help: 1) open dialogues; 2) educate; and, 3) foster relationships in an effort to obtain support/assistance with court-related legislation and statewide initiatives.

Career Day At School

Outreach to local schools during school-organized career days to provide information regarding the variety of careers available to court employees and people working in the justice system.

Summer Youth Employment Program

Work with Riverside Department of Education and local high school counselors to identify high school-age students desiring to engage in Summer Youth Employment Programs at the court. Perhaps initially focusing on motivated and/or low-income students who identify an interest in careers in the justice system.

GOAL II

Objective

SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC

INCREASED PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE OF COURTS – Implement the following strategies to increase public knowledge of the court and create an environment wherein the public is informed on court activities and processes.¹

Offering Continuing Education Programs

Develop and offer ongoing, outreach-focused educational programs for members of the public, community leaders, and public service groups and organizations.

Advertised Speaker's Bureau

Maintain a group of judicial officers willing to: 1) provide insight into how cases proceed through the court system; 2) how conflicts are resolved; 3) discuss current issues; and, 4) discuss the role of the court. The speakers bureau will provide forums in which judges and members of the community are able to exchange views about common concerns.

School Outreach

Maintain communication links with Riverside Office of Education to ensure that Elementary, Middle, and High Schools incorporate units on the justice system in their curriculums. Provide feedback to school administrators to encourage that lessons on the courts and the justice

¹ Riverside Superior Court recognizes that the “low level of public knowledge about the courts is a formidable obstacle to collaboration between the courts and their communities.”¹ As such, educating the public about the role of the courts is a priority.

system be provided at every grade level. And, encourage students to visit the court as part of their lesson plan activities. Also, develop alternative education mediums (e.g., video games, court-related CD-ROM programs) to offer at schools and public libraries.

Courthouse Tours

Offer regular court tours, specialty classes at the court facilities, and organize visits for particular groups of constituents to further outreach to the community.

Citizen Guides

Provide information booths at different court locations and public entrances. Enlist volunteer assistance from local citizenry and retired persons to serve as docents.

“Meet Your Judge” Programs

Organize safe forums in which judges go out into the community to meet and discuss issues of concern with members of the community. Distribute copies of the court’s strategic plan in these forums and receive feedback from citizenry regarding the court’s goals.

Media Outreach

Establish regular outreach activities and meetings with the local media to encourage productive dialogues.

Public Service Announcements

Produce educational community access television programs and develop local radio public services announcements in several different languages to further educate and assist the public.

Objective

BETTER PUBLIC ACCESS – It is our goal to “open the doors” of the court system in order to increase our exposure and to increase the public’s understanding and familiarity with court processes, philosophies, and services.

Children’s Rooms

Establish children’s rooms in each court facility or central locales in court complexes to provide convenience and to facilitate the court process for clients with children.

Electronic Filing

Orchestrate the ability for court clients to file court-related documents electronically to increase their ability to access the court at their convenience.

800 Phone Number and Internet Page**

Establish by _____ a 1-800 telephone number and an Internet page that lists frequently asked court questions and general filing procedures for all areas of the court. (Suggestion made by DOIT)

GOAL III

MODERNIZATION

Objective

DIVERSITY IN OUTREACH/EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION –

Heighten the public's access, input, and involvement in court processes and decisions by facilitating effective communication exchanges

Staff Development

Utilize current and relevant training programs to ensure that all court staff is knowledgeable concerning court outreach services, efforts and policies. These training sessions should also enlist additional support and assistance in specific outreach efforts and elicit new ideas as to how to further our outreach.

Modernization

Incorporate the use of different technologies and mediums to enhance effectiveness in public outreach efforts and dialogues. In an effort to facilitate this communication, identify and utilize a variety of means and mediums to elicit public comment and input (in an effort to effectively address their needs).

Court Web Site / Internet Home Page**

Organize our Web Site to include sub-sections related to our mission, purpose, processes, and desire to effectively serve the public.

Customer Service Surveys/Court Evaluation Forms

Jury Duty Videos/Juror Appreciation Week

Newsletters

Produce quarterly newsletters to celebrate the accomplishments of the employees of Riverside Superior Court and to provide updates regarding specific programs or special projects.

GOAL IV

CASE MANAGEMENT

Objective

BETTER COURT PRACTICES – Offer a means to improve the performance of the court. Implement programs that further enable the court to provide individualized justice.

Citizen Advisory Committees/Commissions

Elicit information from and develop consensus with non-vested citizenry on court philosophical foundations relating to areas of operations (e.g., family law, juvenile, probate, criminal, drug court, civil, etc.). These committees will then work in cooperation with the court to first shape and then work toward mutually satisfying goals.

Alternative Sentencing Programs

Strive toward developing and implementing alternative sentencing programs that promote individualized justices and improve on case adjudication. Examples of these programs are:

- ADR
- Drug Courts
Support, strengthen, and increase the burgeoning drug courts in Riverside County with additional grant money and other alternative sources for funding while concurrently stressing the need for the State of California and the federal government to provide permanent sources for funding. (Drug Courts are non-traditional courts designed to stop drug abuse and related criminal activity. They offer a compelling alternative to individuals whose criminal behavior stems from drug use: court supervised treatment.)
- Domestic Violence Courts
- Teen/Youth Courts

ⁱ High schools throughout Riverside County participate in this annual event sponsored by CRF (Constitutional Rights Foundation). CRF provides the teams with facts in a fictitious case. Each school must argue the case for both sides - defense and prosecution. Teams are scored based on their presentations and impromptu responses to questions from the opposition. Winners of the county competition move on to the state, and state winners then compete nationally. Riverside Superior Court provides courtroom space for practice sessions and for the event itself and court staff facilitates the activities and serves as building security. Several of our judicial officers serve as judicial mentors, helping teams prepare their arguments which in turn provides an excellent opportunity to outreach to our community's youth.